

HOME READING.

THE BUILDING OF THE NEST.

They'll come again to the apple tree—
Robin and all the rest
When the orchard branches are fair to see
In the snow of the blossom dress,
And the prettiest thing in the world will be
The building of the nest.

Weaving it well so round and trim,
Hollowing it with care
Nothing too far away for him,
Nothing, for her, too fair
Hanging it safe on the topmost limb,
Their castle in the air.

Ah! mother-bird, you'll have weary days
When the eggs are under your breast,
And shadow may darken the dancing rays
When the wee ones leave the nest;
But they'll find their wings in a glad amaze,
And God will see to the rest.

So come to the trees with all your train
When the apple blossoms blow;
Though the April shimmer of sun and rain
Go flying to and fro,
And sing to our hearts as we watch again
Your fairy building grow.

The Banana.

We condense an interesting account of this popular fruit, recently written for the *Philadelphia Press*, and dated Port Antonio, Jamaica: While standing on the wharf in this pretty little town, watching man after man bringing his load of bananas for exportation to an American market, my thoughts reverted to the time when these very men worked for a mere pittance in disgraceful servitude. It is not over ten years since the negroes were simply machines used by the wealthy planters to raise the cane and turn it into rum, sugar, molasses and blacking. At that time, although no longer slaves in name, they were dependent on their masters for food and raiment. Such a change from servitude to independence did not come gradually, strangely, but developed itself all at once.

When raising the sugar cane the banana, which was then used to feed pigs. The banana tree in itself is a wonderful thing. It yields only one bunch, and is then cut down to the ground; another tree sprouts out from its mutilated predecessor, and the work of production recommences. One day a small sailing vessel entered this port. It had been unfortunate in trading, and entered the harbor with a view to barter with the natives. At that time a few straggling huts composed the village. The trader reaped a plentiful harvest of bananas, which were given him for a mere song, as the natives were unaware of their value in a foreign market. This began a new era of prosperity, and the original shipper would never recognize in the handsome houses and prosperous stores of the present day the once miserable little village.

The credit of creating the town of Port Antonio is entirely due to the perseverance of a Philadelphia firm, who were the first to run a regular line of steamers trafficking in tropical fruit. A fair idea of the trade may be gotten from the voyage of the *D. J. Foley*, of Philadelphia, laden with flour and other sundries. After a pleasant six days' journey, on landing, a gentleman whose duty it is to secure a cargo for this line of steamers, showed me into a huge shed where twenty or thirty negroes were busy taking the outer bark off thousands of coconuts. The female workers used hatchets to separate the fibre from the nut, but the men, disdaining, used their teeth, and with great effect, grasping the nut firmly in both hands, and tearing away the fibres strip by strip.

The banana room was next visited, containing about eight thousand bunches of perfectly green fruit, bunch after bunch coming in constantly, the lot possibly representing the contribution of over a thousand petty farmers. This fruit being insufficient to load the steamer, a coasting journey was undertaken, and Port Maria, Aura Cabessa, and several other small village ports were visited on the Milk River. The vessel always anchored outside the harbor, the fruit being conveyed on board by means of boats, whose peculiarity consisted in their being made out of the solid trunk of a tree, innocent of paint or ornamentation. The bulk of the cargo, however, was loaded at Port Antonio, where the steamer lay alongside of a rude wharf, extending only a dozen feet from the land, yet allowing sufficient depth of water to float the vessel. At five o'clock in the morning some twenty blacks commenced handing over bunch after bunch into the lower hold, the "boss" negro standing by the hatch and singing out the numbers of bunches in a not unmusical voice. Singing, indeed, in this country seemed to be used as an ordinary vehicle of speech, in a way quite amusing to a foreigner. The work continued without intermission until twelve o'clock, when a rush was made for the dinner of baked plantains and sugar cane. Work was recommenced at two, and continued with unabated vigor until the prolonged sound of a conch shell told of an incoming vessel. Despite remonstrance on the part of the overseer, every hand stopped work, and turned to witness the approach of the strange craft. Order, however, was soon re-established, and toward nightfall the *Foley* was completely loaded with coconuts in her lower hold and bananas between decks. A visit to the banana hold revealed the method of packing. Standing on its stem, each bunch seemed to represent a soldier, erect and in close column. In this way the fruit generates its own heat, each bunch ripening gradually to a golden color.

On the return journey the principal duty of watching the fruit devolves upon the officer of the watch, who is compelled to descend the hold every two hours and report the thermometer's register, which must be kept up to 90°.

When Philadelphia is reached, the real hard work begins again. It being winter time and the frost heavy, the fruit must remain on board until a warm day. Wagon loads of the overripe fruit, which never enters the warehouse, appear on deck and disappear to make room for more. The great work consisted in placing the bunches of fruit in their respective departments. Those almost ripe are placed in a room conveniently heated by gas stoves up to sixty degrees, and intended for immediate sale. The green bananas are placed in another large room shaped like the hold of a ship, and serving the double purpose of a huge ice box in the summer, an airtight compartment heated by steam power in the winter. The arrangements are ingenious and unique. Five years ago the banana trade in Philadelphia was limited to a few thousand bunches each month, the cargoes being brought in sailing vessels. If

one-third of the cargo proved salable the cruise was thought fortunate, but at present one firm alone imports 20,000 bunches each month.

Prohibition.

The Editor of the *Asbury Park Journal* treats the Rum question in the following eloquent language:

When Dr. Chattle's prohibition amendment bill came up in the New Jersey Assembly last week, there was the usual attempt to load it down with clauses impossible to enforce. Assemblyman Mills wanted the bill to include "the use and keeping for sale" of all liquor. Dr. Chattle protested that the bill ought either to pass or be killed in a proper manner. Possibly from shame at such unfair tactics the motion was withdrawn, and after considerable discussion a vote was taken and the bill was lost, 26 voting for it and 80 against it. We are proud to announce that the entire Monmouth delegation voted for the bill.

Now, it must be borne in mind that this bill was not to prohibit the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors in the State, but only to submit the question to the sovereign people of New Jersey, to let them decide whether or not they want prohibition; and yet a majority of the members of the House of Assembly take unto themselves the authority to say that the people—whose servants they are—shall have no voice in this the most important question of the present generation. It is a usurpation of power that should be resented.

We believe, without a trace of wavering doubt, that the day is near when the supporter of rum and its unclean servants will be looked upon—in the Legislature, in public position and in private life—with more contempt and loathing than would greet an open advocate of slavery, murder or rapine. Rum is all wrong; there is not a solitary redeeming feature in the whole foul traffic, from the rotten mashtubs of the distillery to the tempting decanters of the gin palace. It is impoverishing our State; it is filling our prisons, poor-houses and hospitals; it is stealing the lives of our young men, robbing them of honor, morality and health; it is bringing thousands of our middle-aged and old men down to drunkards' graves, covering them with poverty, disgrace, crime. It is costing us in dollars more than food, raiment and shelter; and it is costing us what gold can never repay; for what is gold to the worse than widowed wife of a drunkard, or money to the mother whose very heartstrings have been torn out and whose life has been rendered one long death-pang by that most heartless of all monsters—rum?

There are thousands in our State to-day only waiting—and waiting in agony—to do something to banish the curse and rescue their loved ones from its pitiless power; and yet there are thirty men sitting in our Legislative chamber who conspire with the enemy to bind your hands and ours, to close your mouths and ours, to stifle and crush every expression of sentiment by the people they were elected to represent, lest that sentiment should be adverse to their master.

You may dam a river, and its flow for a time will be stopped. The dam may be made higher and stronger as the increasing volume of water rises to its crest; but there will come a time when the pressure is too strong for human power to restrain, and the whole opposing fabric will be swept to destruction. The panned waters of Prohibition in New Jersey are rising; look out for the flood.—*Asbury Park Journal*.

Rich People Who Are Loved.

It is instructive to note the different feelings with which very rich people are regarded by the poor, and indeed, by almost the entire community. Mrs. Astor, one of the wealthiest women in New York, has been and still is seriously ill. The news of her condition has been read daily by thousands of the poor in that city with heartfelt solicitude, the natural expression of respect and gratitude. It is not that she has been benevolent in her impulses and energies—has felt and done something for the poor—that she is thus esteemed. Mrs. Astor has provided homes in the West for many hundreds of the waifs of New York, directing the enterprise personally, and employing her own agents. (She has in other ways done much, in a personal and unostentatious manner, to ameliorate the condition of the poor, and to assist those who are in trouble. And as a result no one rails at her riches; the poor pray for her recovery to health. Peter Cooper was a rich man, but he was not hated and envied as many millionaires of the metropolis. In case of an uprising, his house would have been safe. He retained his sympathies for the working people, and did, as a pure pleasure, what the most of his class neglect even as an obligation. There are similar examples wherever the rich and poor dwell together. The moral seems to draw itself.—*Boston Herald*.

The Boy Was All Right.

A clothing dealer down on Jefferson Avenue was dancing around the door of his store in a great rage yesterday when an acquaintance halted and asked him the cause of his excitement:

"Vy, dot new poy of mine sells a man a hat for a dollar dot vhas marked twelve shillings."

"And you lose fifty cents?"

"Feefy cents! I discharge dot poy so queek his head doan half time to swim!"

In the course of an hour the pedestrian was repassing the store; seeing the man at the door with a smile on his face he asked:

"Well, did you discharge the boy?"

"Dot poy vhas all right, sir! When I comes to inquire into it, I don't let him go if I haf to pay him more wages. He makes a mistake on price, but when he gifts back der change for a ten-dollar bill he gits me rid of all my trade dollars and pieces mit holes in 'em!"

List of Letters.

Remaining unclaimed in the Post Office at Bloomfield, N. J., on Wednesday, April 2d, 1884.

Bloomfield B. B. Club—Johnston, Paul Baldwin, Chas. P. Blakely, Isabella Bogert, G. C. S. Brennan, Mary Brien, O. Ellen Crogan, Pat'k Foreman, Geo. Hat Finisher Society—Williams, Mrs. J. N. Jacobus, Edward Johnson, J. W. Wilson, Anna

Any person calling for the above will please ask for "advertised" letters. H. DODD, P. M.

"The smallest hair," says Goethe, "throws its shadow." It does, it does. And if it happens to throw the penumbra across the butter, it casts its little gloom over the entire community.—*Burdette*.

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AT EIGHT O'CLOCK.

Four Geological Lectures.

By Professor Harry E. Richards, M. D.

FEBRUARY 19th. Birth of the Solar System.

FEBRUARY 26th. Scientific Exactness of the Bible. The Molten Globe. The Universal Sea. The First Land.

MARCH 4th. The First Life. The Age of Shell-Fish. The Coral Builders. The Age of Fishes. The Reptilian Age, and the Coral Period.

MARCH 11th. The Age of the Great Land Animals. The Domestic Animals. The Fruit and Forest Trees. The Appearance of Man.

One Historical and Descriptive Lecture.

MARCH 18th. The Greek Church, by Rev. NICHOLAS BJERRING, late Priest of the Greek Church in New York City.

ONE EDUCATIONAL LECTURE.

APRIL 8th. Theories of Education, by Rev. CHARLES E. KNOX, D. D.

SINGLE TICKETS 30 CENTS. TICKETS FOR THE COURSE, \$1.50.

For Sale at the Drug Stores.

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